

## DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

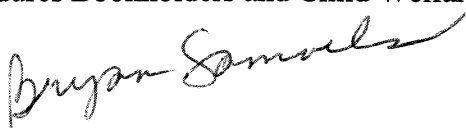
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### POLICY GUIDE 2004.03

#### REFERRAL AND SCREENING FOR PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALIZATION

**DATE:** July 20, 2004

**TO:** Rules and Procedures Bookholders and Child Welfare Staff

**FROM:** Bryan Samuels 

**EFFECTIVE:** Immediately

#### I. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy Guide is to issue revised crisis and referral procedures for children and youth for whom the Department is legally responsible who may be in need of psychiatric hospitalization. This Policy Guide also describes changes in the roles of the crisis and referral line and Screening, Assessment and Support Services (SASS) agents.

#### II. Primary Users

The primary users of this Policy Guide are foster parents, relative caregivers, staff of the Department and purchase of service agencies (including relative care, traditional foster care, specialized foster care, and supervised independent living agencies), residential care providers and other child welfare personnel.

#### III. Background

The Screening, Assessment and Support Services (SASS) program was implemented to ensure that children for whom the Department is legally responsible receive a mental health examination by an independent evaluator prior to being admitted to a psychiatric institution. The role of the independent evaluator is to assess the child's need for psychiatric intervention and care and to determine if less restrictive service interventions in the community might be utilized to address the mental health needs of the child. If psychiatric hospitalization is necessary, SASS also assumes responsibility for assisting the case manager in monitoring the child's care while hospitalized and in developing and implementing post-hospitalization services.



#### IV. Implementation

Effective July 1, 2004, the *Children's Mental Health Act of 2003* requires that any child at risk of psychiatric hospitalization for whom public payment may be sought must be referred to the Crisis and Referral Entry Service (CARES) phone line. CARES will determine whether the crisis situation meets the clinical criteria for Screening, Assessment and Support Services (SASS) (see below) and whether public funding may be necessary.

CARES is a statewide toll-free number to which referral may be made by parents, staff of the Department and purchase of service providers, caregivers, school personnel and others who believe a child or youth is in a psychiatric crisis which may require hospitalization. **The telephone number for CARES is 1-800-345-9049, TTY 1-800-905-9645.**

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##### **CRISIS AND REFERRAL ENTRY SERVICE (CARES) PHONE LINE**

- a. **CARES phone line:** CARES is staffed to accept calls and make referrals 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Once CARES receives a request, and prior to completion of the referring call, a priority screening will be conducted and a CARES determination will be made that the referral represents:

1. **A psychiatric crisis and/or the child is a danger to self or others or property:**
  - An immediate referral will be made to the SASS provider serving the LAN where the child is experiencing the crisis.
  - If the SASS agent serving the LAN in which the child is experiencing the crisis is different than the SASS provider serving the LAN in which the child resides, the CARES vendor shall notify the child's "home" SASS provider immediately after contacting the SASS agent who will respond to the crisis.
  - If law enforcement assistance is needed at any time due to the acuity of the crisis, the CARES vendor shall either immediately link the caller to law enforcement and then notify the SASS agent or initiate a three-way call between the local law enforcement and the SASS provider if the situation escalates after the initiation of the call to the SASS agent.
2. **No psychiatric emergency and/or the child is not a danger to self/others but the family needs immediate assistance for placement stability:**

- An immediate referral will be made for community-based services through the appropriate System of Care (SOC) provider if the child is in an eligible placement (e.g., home of relative, traditional foster care, or home of parent) or if he/she has recently stepped-down from a more restrictive placement such as an institution or group home.
  - CARES will initiate the referral via a three-way call between the person making the referral, the SOC provider, and the CARES worker.
3. **No psychiatric emergency, the child is not a danger to self/others and the family is not in need of crisis placement stabilization services:**
- The CARES worker will take all identifying information and will attempt to assist the caller in identifying the appropriate resource, including a non-emergency referral to an SOC provider.
- b. **CARES Disposition:** When a child has been successfully referred and linked with an appropriate service provider, CARES will maintain a record of the disposition of the referral (e.g., “crisis referral to SASS”, “referral for placement stabilization services to SOC”, “linked with caseworker” or “information only”).

## **SCREENING, ASSESSMENT AND SUPPORT SERVICES**

The Departments of Children and Family Services, Human Services and Public Aid have contracted with a statewide network of community mental health agencies to provide Screening, Assessment and Support Services (SASS) to children and youth who may be at risk of psychiatric hospitalization.

SASS services require a referral from the Crisis and Referral Entry Service (CARES) and are provided for a 90-day period beginning with the date that the SASS agent begins an initial screening of a child in psychiatric crisis, unless the Department extends that period.

- a. **SASS Response:** The SASS provider is required to respond to all calls/pages received from CARES within 30 minutes and to have the capacity to respond face-to-face to all requests for crisis response services within 90 minutes of receiving the referral from CARES, including a determination of when, how and where the screening will occur. The preferred location for the screening is where the crisis is occurring. The SASS disposition is required to be completed within four (4) hours of the CARES referral to the SASS provider.
- b. **SASS Determination to Hospitalize:**
- Hospitalization will be recommended only when community resources are not available or appropriate.
  - If a determination is made to hospitalize, the SASS provider will assist and facilitate a child’s admission to a psychiatric hospital,

- The SASS provider shall work with the parent/guardian/caregiver to select the most appropriate hospital for a child.
- No child under the age of 18 shall be admitted to an adult psychiatric unit.

**V. Questions**

Questions regarding this policy guide should be directed to Jane Hastings 312-814-6805.

**VI. Filing Instructions**

This Policy Guide replaces Policy Guide 2003.08. Please remove Policy Guide 2003.08 from behind Procedures 327, Guardianship Services and replace with this new policy guide.